

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Central Lithographic Printing

Virginia's A.L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Lean Spells Success For Central Litho Printing

Client Profile:

Central Litho Printing is a medium volume commercial printer located in Lynchburg, Virginia, which employs 15 people. The company itself has been in operation since 1955 but was purchased six years ago.

Situation:

Central Litho Printing's new owners, Victor and Robin Clarke, are continuing the firm's long relationship with Virginia's A.L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership (VPMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, which has been involved in Central Litho Printing's continuous improvement efforts since 1998. The most recent endeavor, a value stream mapping exercise, identified non-value-added activities for elimination and discovered opportunities to improve operations by streamlining information flow. With VPMEP's assistance, the Clarkes wanted to take operations to the next level through lean implementation.

Solution:

VPMEP helped Central Litho Printing improve printing operations to strengthen first-time run quality. Streamlining the information and material flows process will provide the means to reduce current lead times and resource requirements while improving quality and ability to meet demands for shorter turnaround. VPMEP led the education of Central Litho Printing's personnel in the theory and practical application of cellular flow/manufacturing and other lean manufacturing techniques. The same personnel then participated in a project involving the design and implementation of a customer service/pre-press processing cell. This process lasted approximately six months, and operations have seen significant improvements since its completion.

Results:

Reduced paper inventories by 60 percent.

Reduced lead time by 50 percent.

Increased profits for the same time period over last year despite decreased revenues.

Retained 5 jobs as a result of the change in operations.

Improved quality levels.

Improved print shop working conditions and employee morale.

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Invested in new digital pre-press equipment.

Testimonial:

"Virginia's A.L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership and all its employees are knowledgeable and take their roles as a technical resource very professionally, seriously, and with integrity. I highly encourage other manufacturers to take advantage of VPMEP's services too."

Victor Clarke, President